touch me, i'm cold (unable to control)

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touch me, i'm cold (unable to control)

by Naomi_Riddle

Summary

Season 1/Slightly canon divergent AU:

Dr. Hannibal Lecter lacks nothing. He’s definitely not lonely, and he’s certainly not touch-starved. And he absolutely, positively doesn’t have a thing for Will Graham.

So when Abigail Hobbs is discharged from the Port Haven Psychiatric Facility, he suggests that she should move in with him - and so should Will. It’s only fair, as they’re both her legal guardians.

A domestic, fluffy little fic of touch-starved down bad Hannibal Lecter, oblivious Will Graham, and sassy Abigail Hobbs who conspires to get her gay dads together. Featuring Winston and Company.

Notes

Title is from "Let's Get Lost" by Bat for Lashes and Beck. This fic is totally inspired by my realization that Hannibal was super touch-starved and I couldn't let go of the idea so here we are! I hope you enjoy<3

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

"You are obsessed with Will Graham."

Bedelia's clear, sky-blue eyes pierce him. Hannibal shifts slightly in his chair across from her. Dr. Du Maurier is one of the only people he's let peek behind his person suit. She can see him now, and he wishes it didn't make him so discomfited.

"I am…intrigued by him," Hannibal responds delicately.

"Obsessively." Bedelia doesn't hold back; she never has. Hannibal reclines in his seat and peers around her living room. Externally, he projects an image of calm; internally he's scrambling. He wonders if he's said too much about Will in their previous conversations.

For the first time in a long while, I see a possibility of friendship.

Hannibal wouldn't want to kill her. He taps his fingers against his knee surreptitiously. He likes Bedelia, he honestly does. So few people have gotten to see him. Tap tap tap. He does not know if he can afford to lose another.

So few people have even the capacity to understand him, without judgment, without revilement.

Will Graham is one of them.

Bedelia seems to know this, too. "You need him. More than he needs you," she says slowly.

Hannibal forces himself to calm down, to still his hand, slow his breathing. Bedelia's ivory and sunflower yellow Persian carpet would be destroyed beyond repair if he snapped here. The blood stains would never come out.

It is a stunning carpet.

“I do not need him,” Hannibal says, as nonchalantly as he can manage. “I’ve lived this long without him. He is a friend; I have friends.”

“No, you don’t,” Bedelia notes, her head tilting slightly. Her straw-colored hair would look exquisite in a tableau. Hannibal would be sure to display it properly, so the sunlight bathes it golden. “You have…connections, acquaintances, and colleagues. You know of them, yet you truly don’t know them. Much less allow yourself to be known by them.”

“Intimacy is a gift,” Hannibal says calmly.

“Intimacy is a two-way street. You can only receive it if you attempt to give it.”

Maybe this carpet isn't worth sparing after all.

"How do you attempt to give, or show intimacy?" Bedelia asks, then, a kinder note to her voice.

"I think that's obvious," Hannibal says, privately relieved from their sparring match. "I pride myself on displaying affection through acts of service, most often through my culinary skills. Gift-giving and musical compositions follow suit."

"Yes, that's right. Tell me, Hannibal - how would you like to receive intimacy?"

Hannibal stills. "In the same ways, I suppose," he says airily, as if it's clear. As if it's something he hardly knows himself, never having had the need - or perhaps, the desire - for intimacy from another person before.

"The ways we express intimacy are not always exactly the ways we'd like to receive it."

Hannibal's nostrils flair. "Is it so hard to believe, Bedelia?"

"I doubt you've met anyone as skilled of a cook as you." Bedelia smiles craftily.

"You flatter me."

"Words of affirmation are flattery to you?"

"They are, when they are not sincere."

"I think you rarely accept them - because you don't let anyone in far enough so the praise *would* be sincere."

Hannibal's eyes harden to flints. He knows exactly how he'd approach her...he'd simmer the meat in a honeyed marinade, with sprigs of rosemary and a dash of lemon zest...he'd relish her. Bedelia lightly clears her throat. "Words of affirmation from Will Graham, for example, would matter a hefty amount more than from a stranger."

"Wouldn't that be the case for everyone? The word of a friend over that of a stranger?" His heart is racing, though, because Bedelia is right. One simple compliment from Will over a simple protein scramble - *this is delicious* - matters to him more than flowery, extravagant praise he's received at his dinner parties from guests.

"So you agree with me, then. I guessed as much. Your ways of receiving intimacy, I'd wager, are words of affirmation...and physical touch."

Hannibal's body stills completely. Bedelia goes on, though, oblivious to his internal turmoil. "You were a surgeon for years; a musician, an artist, and a cook for just as many. Your two

hands have saved lives..." She pauses. *And taken them.* "And created art," she adds, clearing her throat slightly. "No wonder touch must be of great importance to you."

"You're right," Hannibal says, as polite as he can manage under the circumstances. "Physical touch is something I, as all artists, deem irreplaceable for the creation of art, in its many forms."

"Of course, Hannibal. But that's not what I meant." There's that careful, assessing glint in Bedelia's eyes again. "Do you receive touch, as often as you give it? Do you receive it at all?"

Hannibal swallows dryly. For the first time in a long time, he does not know what to say.

Because the truth is absolutely out of the question.

There's a knock on the door. Bedelia's next patient. He didn't even notice the hour was over. Hannibal smoothens the lapels of his coat when he stands. Bedelia's eyes meet his, and they shine as she smiles gently at him.

Almost placating.

"You will keep in touch, I hope."

"You know I will." This is easy to him - practiced politeness, the back-and-forth. What's expected of him.

"Think about what I said, Hannibal." Bedelia leans in. "Only by acknowledging when our needs are not being met can we hope to address them."

"I assure you, I shall."

If he bookmarks a Greek honey-lemon chicken recipe for later on his iPad, well, he's just doing research for his next dinner party.

Bedelia is not often wrong, but Hannibal Lecter can see her shortcomings. Psychiatry is less of a science than an art. Bedelia simply painted a portrait of him that lacked resemblance to its subject.

Because for one, Hannibal Lecter is *not* touch-starved.

Physical touch itself is a meaningless thing, as far as Hannibal is concerned. The release of oxycontin and the reduction of stress hormones is a small price to pay for the burden of letting anyone so close to him. Besides, with his balanced diet and vitamin intake, he hardly lacks any of the chemical benefits he'd stand to gain.

As for the psychological aspect...he's merely trained himself through years of practice to enjoy his own company. And he truly does enjoy it; he doesn't think he'd ever give up privacy in the kitchen alone as he prepares his next masterpiece. Art for art's sake; Hannibal savors the creation of his portraits and tableaus as much as he does the final result.

He has wealth, respect in his field, esteem in Baltimore's high-brow social circles, and a successful career. Hannibal Lecter lacks nothing.

Nothing at all.

Franklyn Froideveaux is crying again.

"Please," he gasps out, reaching for the tissue box. Hannibal, with an internal sigh, reaches forward and hands it to him. Franklyn loudly blows his nose and crumples up the used tissue, throwing it on the side table. Hannibal barely suppresses a look of disgust, as he looks around his office.

"I feel so neurotic," Franklyn laments. "I want to get closer to Tobias, but I just feel like...like he's not letting me in. Like he thinks I'm pathetic, and needy."

"The problem lies not with Tobias, but with yourself. Ask yourself this, Franklyn - why do you feel the need to lean on anyone else? What do you lack within yourself that you seek to replace with someone else?"

"I mean, I'm not perfect. No one is," Franklyn says raggedly, sniffling a little. "But even if I was, I'd still want the company of others. I'm not *insane* for wanting that."

"Of course not." Hannibal gives him an inscrutable Sphinx-like smile. "The company we seek out reveals great deals about ourselves. Why are you so inclined towards knowing Tobias?"

"It's...it's not just him," Franklyn squeaks out, wiping his nose and then wiping his dirty hands on the leather armchair's handles. Hannibal's right eye twitches. "It's you, too. But I feel like I bore you."

Of course you do, Hannibal thinks irritably. "Why are you inclined towards knowing me, then?"

"Because I feel like...like you can understand me," Franklyn says desperately, "like...you can know me. Does that make sense? Do I sound crazy?"

"I can understand you because I am your psychiatrist," Hannibal says calmly. "Not your friend."

"Don't you ever want a friend?" Franklyn asks him miserably. "Someone you can tell all your deepest worries to...someone who just...gets you?"

"Of course," Hannibal says, inclining his head slightly. "We all want the same things, Franklyn. But our doctor-patient relationship is just that - a doctor-patient relationship. I'm afraid it can't go further than that."

"Why not?" Franklyn says, almost whimpering now. *Pathetic* , Hannibal thinks with a rise of malice that nearly surprises himself. How pathetic to be groveling at someone's feet, begging for their attention...practically begging for a passing glance.

He has never, and will never, do such a thing to damage his own dignity.

He doesn’t need anyone else. Obviously.

"Because our relationship is strictly professional," Hannibal says in an assuaging way.

Just keep it professional, Will had once told him, as they ate breakfast together.

Or we could socialize, like adults, Hannibal had replied.

I don't find you that interesting.

You will.

"Remember, Franklyn. The answer to all your questions lies inward. What do you lack that you seek to gain outside of yourself?" Hannibal tilts his head to the side. "With enough introspection and work, there is no problem of yours that you yourself cannot conjure the solution for."

Franklyn sniffles, wiping his face free of tears. Hannibal stands and places a hand on his shoulder. A paltry show of solidarity, though it fills Hannibal with more disgust than was worth the effort of the action.

Bedelia's words echo in his mind.

Do you receive touch, as often as you give it? Do you receive it at all?

Only by acknowledging when our needs are not being met can we hope to address them.

He returns to his seat; the session is over.

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The Port Haven Psychiatric Facility's greenhouse is outfitted with monstera plants, pothos vines, and banana trees. Birds-of-paradise flowers rise above their beds, adding pops of vermillion, bronze, and gold to the greenery of the room. The air is humid and quite warm in here; Will Graham unties his scarf. Hannibal watches the motion with undisguised interest. Will's neck is so slight; Hannibal thinks he could wrap his entire hand around it.

They are on a walk with their surrogate daughter. Abigail Hobbs walks in front of him, alongside Will, through the greenhouse.

"I still don't think you should be talking to Freddie Lounds," Will says carefully. "She doesn't have your best intentions in mind."

"And you do?" Abigail asks pointedly. Hannibal can excuse her rudeness; her tension with Will is at least somewhat justified.

Will, clearly, folds at this reminder of her father. "I just think you-you should be focused on healing. And eventually, a return to normal life. Like going back to school."

"Going back to school is a great idea," she huffs. "I'll be the freak with the psycho dad and the dead mom. I'm sure it'll be great."

"We - we can transfer you to a different school district," Will says cautiously, peeking at Hannibal.

"I don't want to go back to school," Abigail says slightly petulantly. "There's money to be made in the book business. I can sell the house, buy an apartment...I can live off of royalties for a while, until I figure something out."

Hannibal and Will pointedly look at each other. "Education is an irreplaceable gift to the mind and the soul," Hannibal says loftily. "Abigail, I cannot permit you to abandon your schooling entirely."

"You're not my dad, either," she retorts, crossing her arms over her chest.

"We are your guardians, now," Hannibal says calmly. Will nods, even if this idea makes him look a bit uneasy.

Parenthood was such an unprecedented responsibility, and it was suddenly thrust upon both of them. He can hardly fault Will for the obvious strain it's put him through.

"Well, you can't make decisions for me."

Hannibal is unperturbed. "We will work out an agreement."

"You can't bribe me into going back to school."

"We can influence you," Hannibal says gently, "into making the best decisions for your future."

Will scrubs his face with his hands, clearly exhausted by their first real argument as a pseudo-family. "Can we have a minute?" he asks Abigail rather desperately.

"Yeah. Go ahead and gossip about me," she says morosely, turning around and exiting the greenhouse into the cold winter air outside.

Will sighs loudly in her absence, and then takes a bottle of aspirin out of his pocket, shakes two in his hand, and dry-swallows them. Hannibal watches this with growing anxiety that he tries to subdue. "Your headaches...are they worsening?"

"Nope," Will says, smiling rather humorlessly. He runs a hand through his errant curls; Hannibal privately wishes he could do the same. "This current headache is very much Abigail-induced."

"She is at odds with the confinement they've placed her in. Port Haven is hardly a haven for her."

"She's...." Will groans, rubbing his eyes with the palms of his hands. "I mean, I can't blame her at all. She's stifled here, she's basically on twenty-four-seven watch. She lost her parents, she's under FBI scrutiny, and one of her guardians killed her biological father...no wonder she's acting out. The thing is, I can't blame her at all. If I was her, I'd hate me too."

Will Graham's stark empathy shocks Hannibal to his core. He can see so much, so quickly; more than that, he feels so much. He can see how much he feels for her, in this moment, even with her snappiness towards him.

"I will talk to Abigail," Hannibal says quietly. "Don't worry about her." Then, rather cravenly, he reaches forward and puts a hand between Will's shoulder blades, a comforting touch. Will's skin feels warm through his gray-and-blue flannel shirt. Hannibal wishes he could touch it directly; wishes he could feel how soft it is, how his skin stretches across his bones, wishes to feel the tendons flexing in his hands as he caresses them.

He feels almost guilty when he draws his hand back a few moments later, as if he has just taken something that did not belong to him.

Will, it seems, was hardly paying attention. "Thanks," is all he says gruffly.

Hannibal nods. His heart is racing, and he wishes he could quiet it.

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"So..." Abigail lets the word hang in the air, an eyebrow raised. "Why'd you sneak me out - again?"

Hannibal turns his attention towards his stove. He has slices of lemon ricotta French toast piled up on a plate beside him; he's making a raspberry compote as they speak. "I told you, Abigail, I am your guardian. I have all the right to whisk you away."

"Not for overnight stays, though," Abigail says sullenly. Hannibal gives her a commiserating smile. He knows she must hate staying there.

"No; not for overnight stays."

"Do you know how awful it is?" she says, her legs swaying back and forth. She's sitting on the counter, a bowl of whipped cream in her arms that she keeps stirring as instructed. "I get woken up like, every couple of hours, for wellness checks by the nurses. I barely get any sleep at all."

"It is appalling, the way you've been treated," Hannibal says with sincerity. "As soon as Jack Crawford clears you as a suspect, you can be discharged from Port Haven - and then you can come and stay here with me."

He's already made arrangements; he's set up one of the guest rooms to be more homey, more personable. He's added lavender sheets and wall decals, Abigail's favorite color. He hopes she'll like it.

"Really?" Abigail goggles, clearly incredulous. "What about Will?"

Hannibal hides a smile. Even after what Will did - even after what he took from her - she is still undoubtedly fond of him.

They did save her, after all. Together.

"What about him?" Hannibal prompts, stirring the simmering raspberries.

“Is he gonna move in, too?”

Hannibal stills. “Will has his own house,” he says in a calm, devil-may-care way. “In Wolf Trap, Virginia.”

“Yeah, I know.” Abigail looks at him pointedly. “So he’s not moving in then?”

Hannibal faintly feels his cheeks starting to burn. “Do you think that would be best for your recovery?” he asks, then. “Having both your guardians under the same roof?”

Abigail snorts. “Give up one dad, get two for free,” she jokes tonelessly.

“I’m being serious, Abigail.”

“It’s not just about my recovery - although that’d make it a whole lot easier, right? Being with both of you?” She smiles a little. “You like him, don’t you?”

It’s only years of practice that help Hannibal school his features into indifference. “Will and I are friends and colleagues,” he says practically.

“Just friends?” she asks, raising an eyebrow.

Hannibal is sure his cheeks must be reddened now. “I’m not sure what you mean.”

"Oh, I don't know," Abigail says indifferently. "Just sometimes the way you look at him...it looks like you want to gobble him up." She gives him a rather devious smile.

Hannibal does not dare to return it. "I can assure you, my diet is rather complete without the addition of Will Graham," he says with practiced courtesy as he serves the berry compote with the French toast. "Speaking of which, it's time to eat."

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Will Graham paces into Hannibal's office at the beginning of his session, clearly upset. He throws a wrapped parcel on the sofa.

"What's that?" Hannibal asks curiously.

"A gift for Abigail," Will says, distraught. “I was upset when I bought it.”

Hannibal picks it up and peels back a fraction of the wrapping paper curiously. It’s a fly-making kit. “You want to teach her how to fish?”

“Hey!” Will slaps his hand - it’s light, it barely stings. Hannibal has killed many people for far smaller infractions. But nothing Will does, no matter how rude, feels like an infraction. Even this is horribly…endearing.

“It’s…it’s meant to be a surprise,” Will says quickly, his cheeks flushing. Hannibal is surprised by the captivating sight. Will is clearly embarrassed by his reflex action, but too proud to apologize for it.

Hannibal leans forward, a conspiratorial smile on his face. “Your secret’s safe with me.”

This, perhaps, is one of the first times Will’s knowingly touched him - beyond the brush of hands that’s happened in the exchange of crime scene photos and paperwork.

If it takes instigation for Will to touch him…Hannibal would gladly embrace the challenge. He’d hit him where it hurts, just for Will’s hands on him…for Will’s slim fingers wrapped around his throat…how would Will Graham endeavor to kill him, if he tried? Oh, Hannibal wishes he’d use his hands.

“-Hannibal?”

Hannibal blinks twice. Will’s just said something, and he missed it. “Pardon?”

“I said, you can’t keep secrets from me about Abigail,” Will says with furrowed brows. “The Port Haven nurses let me know you discharged her for a visit this Tuesday.”

“Ah, yes. I made us breakfast for dinner. If my memory serves, you were visiting a crime scene in Delaware that night; otherwise I certainly would have invited you.”

“I’d appreciate the heads up,” Will says, frowning slightly. “I sort of felt blindsided when I found out from the nurses, not you.”

“It had not occurred to me,” Hannibal says honestly. He can see why Will would want to know. Will was protective of her; he cared about her, even when she pushed back against him.

“How is she towards you?” Will shoves his hands in his pockets. “Does she…I mean, are you able to get through to her at all?”

Hannibal nods readily. “I think the house visits are good for her. She’s much more agreeable outside Port Haven.” He clears his throat gently, mentally preparing for Will’s upcoming outburst. “In fact, once Jack clears her as a suspect and she’s discharged permanently, I’d like her to move in with me.”

“What?” Will snaps, clearly surprised. He rounds on him, and without even realizing it, Hannibal takes a step back so he’s against the bookshelves. Will’s effectively cornered him.

Hannibal swallows dryly. There’s less than a foot of distance between their chests; Hannibal thinks he can feel the residual warmth of Will even now. The smell of his terribly cheap pine-scented aftershave fills his nostrils. “You want Abigail to move in? With you? Did you tell her on Tuesday?”

Hannibal nods wordlessly, his face flicking across Will’s delicate features. “And when were you planning on telling me?” Will hisses, clearly agitated now. “ *Were* you going to tell me?”

“Yes,” Hannibal says, quietly, hopelessly. He has craved Will’s proximity for so long that finally being in it is far more overwhelming than he imagined.

Will scoffs. “Well thanks for the heads up,” he says with heavy sarcasm. “You know what? I shouldn’t even be mad. Because of course Abigail wouldn’t want to move out to the middle of nowhere, Virginia, to live with the guy that shot her dad ten times.”

“Will,” Hannibal says gently. Will doesn’t meet his eyes; he’s stubbornly looking down. “Will,” Hannibal repeats, and then, because he can’t resist, he crooks his index finger under Will’s chin, so their eyes meet. His light stubble tickles Hannibal’s finger; all Hannibal can think about is the specks of viridian in Will’s bright blue eyes.

“Abigail does care for you. Just as much, I daresay, as you do for her.”

Will's cheeks flush. "You're bullshitting me," he says wretchedly.

"On the contrary," Hannibal says, "when I proposed to her that she should move in with me after she's discharged, her first question to me was whether you'd also be moving in."

"What?" Will gapes. "Wait, did she ask - if I'd be moving in with you?"

"Yes," Hannibal says, with a prickle of embarrassment at this confession.

Will laughs in surprise. "Oh my god. That's insane. There's - there's no way." He peers at Hannibal curiously. "What did you say?"

"I said that you had your own home, and your own responsibilities."

"Right." Will nods readily. "We should probably do some sort of…joint custody thing. Sometimes she's over at your place…sometimes mine."

Joint custody. Hannibal stiffens at the idea. As if they were a divorced couple, and their daughter was shuttled between them, always in orbit, never at home.

"Actually, that might hinder Abigail's growth, instead of strengthening it," Hannibal says. "Her home has recently been destroyed. Trying to begin anew in a fractured environment might not be the best option for her. She needs one solid home base, Will - not two separate ones."

"What are you saying?" Will says in a tetchy tone. "She's just going to be over at yours, then?"

“I’m saying,” Hannibal hears himself say, “you both could live under my roof. It wouldn’t be any trouble.”

Will’s eyes widen; Hannibal realizes what he’s just said, what he’s just offered, and knows he won’t be able to take it back.

“What?” Will says weakly.

Oh good lord, Hannibal thinks to himself.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You’re moving in with Hannibal?”

Jack Crawford looks at him in disbelief at the news. Will Graham shoves his hands in his pockets.

“Congratulations, Will,” Jimmy Price gushes supportively. “I’m so proud of you.”

“Whoa,” Zeller says impressively. “You guys are moving pretty fast, aren’t you?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Will wonders aloud.

“Oh my god,” Beverly mutters under her breath.

“You three. Out,” Jack commands. Zeller, Price, and Katz leave Jack’s office, breaking out into murmuring gossip. The intimidating, burly head of the FBI’s Behavioral Sciences Unit turns to Will. “Now can you tell me what the hell is going on between you and Lecter?”

“Nothing’s going on,” Will says honestly. “It was Abigail’s idea, apparently. Hannibal says it’d aid her recovery, if both of her guardians are under one roof.”

Jack frowns shrewdly. He’s made his distrust of Abigail quite clear; however, she hasn’t been implicated as an accessory to her father’s crimes. She’s been cleared as of this morning. Hannibal’s gone to collect her.

“Are you and Hannibal…” Jack begins, and then waves his hand dismissively at Will’s blank face. “You know what? It’s none of my business.”

“We’re just trying to be good guardians, Jack.”

“Of course,” Jack says fastidiously, “I have no doubt you two will be great dads to her. It’s just…so sudden, you know? Zeller was right - you guys *are* moving fast.”

“But Abigail’s discharged today,” Will says, his brow furrowing slightly. “Where else is she supposed to go? She can’t go back to Minnesota.”

Jack blinks owlishly. “Yeah. Of course.”

“Is there anything I can help out with today?” Will ventures next.

“You know what? Have the day off,” Jack says, throwing his hands in the air. “You need to be there for your, ah, daughter. I’d say you’ve got your work cut out for you.”

———

I was right, Will thinks to himself. His home in Wolf Trap was not at all an ideal place to house a sixteen-year-old girl. For one, it was small - he did have a spare room, but it was cluttered and filled with boxes he hadn’t sorted through in years. The ranch home was in the middle of acres and acres of grassy land that made it feel unmoored and removed from civilization itself. Hell, Will had more dogs than neighbors.

Part of him is grateful that Hannibal so easily extended the offer for both of them to move into his Baltimore home. Will’s not going to sell the house or anything. This will be temporary, he tells himself. A temporary stay, for as long Abigail needs it.

He’s still not entirely sure if his presence is going to help anything. Deep down, part of him will always think Abigail will resent him. He wouldn't blame her if she did.

He’s packing his truck with boxes of his things when a silver Audi rolls up his driveway and Alana Bloom steps out. She’s as effortlessly gorgeous as always, her dark waves ruffled against the breeze. She smiles when she meets his eyes. “Going somewhere?”

“Something like that,” he says with a light chuckle. His palms feel oddly sweaty; he always gets nervous around Alana, and hopes he doesn’t look too manic or odd.

“I heard the news,” Alana says, smiling. “It traveled like wildfire throughout the department.”

“It must be Jimmy Price’s doing.”

“Probably.” She grins. “So you’re moving in with Hannibal?”

“It was Abigail’s idea. And Hannibal said it’d aid her recovery. Something about needing a solid, stable home base.”

“Abigail Hobbs needs stability,” Alana agrees. “I hope you’re able to give it to her.”

“I hope so, too,” Will says earnestly.

“Need a hand?” Alana offers, and together they hoist a box of Will’s things into the back of his truck. Will doesn’t have much, truth be told - most of these are old clothes, books, and things for his dogs.

Alana seems to have read his mind. “Your dogs…”

“Are coming with me, of course,” Will says. “Hannibal agreed to it.”

Alana raises an eyebrow. “Will, you have seven dogs.”

“And?”

“You’ve seen Hannibal’s home, right?” Alana says, chuckling a little. “He has silk tapestries, ivory and cherrywood furniture, chiffon curtains-”

“So?”

“So,” Alana says slowly, “I’m not exactly sure how Winston and company are going to fit in that environment.”

Speak of the devil. Winston comes bounding out from the porch and woofs excitedly at the familiar face. Alana scratches him behind his ears, grinning.

“You know, I’m surprised Hannibal agreed,” Alana says with an unreadable expression. “He’s very particular about cleanliness. Not sure he’s a big dog-hair person - or a pet-person.”

“Well, I wouldn’t have it any other way. There’s no way I could give them up,” Will says fiercely.

In fact, Hannibal had looked a little…well, *peeved* isn’t the word…when Will had brought up his pack of dogs. Perhaps because he knew Will wouldn't renege on his pets.

“Did you come all the way out here to help me move?” Will asks with a chuckle when they get the final box into the back of his truck.

Alana smiles. “I have reservations at six for Portia’s, a restaurant downtown, on Friday night,” she says. “Would you like to go to dinner together?”

Will swallows dryly. Dinner. Together. Reservations.

Alana was asking him on a *date* .

Oh my God. Will runs a hand through his hair. “Uh…Friday…uh…yeah,” he stutters nervously, “yeah, yeah, that sounds *great* .”

Alana’s beaming. “Okay, great. See you then.”

She kisses him on the cheek; Will can still faintly smell her floral perfume as she drives off.

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“I don’t like surprises,” Abigail says petulantly.

“Trust me, Abigail - I think you will like this one,” Hannibal says gently. He’s steering her by the shoulders through the second floor corridor of his home. There’s a blindfold wrapped over her head.

“What’s the point of taking me home when I can’t see your house?” Abigail says grouchily.

“In due time, Abigail, in due time. Humor me.” They reach the door and Hannibal pushes it open. “You can take off the blindfold now.”

Abigail peels it off, and gapes at the sight in front of her.

Star-shaped string lights hang over a canopy bed with lavender sheets. A print of the Big Ben is framed by the side of her bed, near a lily-colored vanity and a closet full of new clothes. There's a desk, too, with a golden-colored lamp and a fresh set of notebooks. A fuzzy lavender throw rug and lavender sheets finish the room's decor.

"It's…it's beautiful," Abigail breathes. Her voice catches in her throat, as she goes to the closet and peeks through the racks. "How…how did you…"

"I noticed you had a lot of lavender in your previous room," Hannibal says, his throat tightening at the sheer awe on Abigail's face. "I…I thought I'd try to replicate it, at least to a degree."

"No way. This is *tons* better than my old room," Abigail gushes.

"If you don't like anything, feel free to let me know - I can exchange or replace anything you'd like."

Abigail shakes her head. "This is…really nice. You didn't have to do all this," she says, looking up at him. Her aquamarine eyes are shining brightly with unshed tears. "Thank you," she whispers.

And then, she reaches forward and hugs him.

Hannibal is frozen in place, before he remembers himself and wraps his arms around her, drawing her close. Abigail burrows further against his chest, and Hannibal tucks his chin above her head, smoothening back her hair, and Abigail sobs.

This is how he would hold his sister, so many lifetimes ago, when she was afraid…she, too, fit right against his chest, just like this…

Hannibal tries to remember the last time he hugged someone this tightly, this intimately. Come to think of it, it must have been Mischa, all those years ago.

Mischa reminds him so much of Abigail. Both of them were sacrificial lambs…both suffered far more than their fair share.

Both, in a way, are his brethren and his children. He raised his younger sister, as he attempts to raise Abigail.

Both are his surrogate daughters.

"Are you all right?" he murmurs softly.

Abigail sniffles against his coat. "I just feel…overwhelmed," she whispers brokenly. She makes no attempt to pull away; neither does he. She doesn't know it, but he needs this contact just as much as she does.

"This is your home now, Abigail," Hannibal says warmly. "It will take some getting used to, but I have no doubt it will be familiar to you one day."

She nods a little, and then pulls away slightly to look at him. "Are you sure it's not a bother?" she asks in a watery voice. "I…I could always go back to Minnesota…or like I said, I could sell the house and move into an apartment…"

"Nonsense," Hannibal says firmly. "I couldn't permit you to do such a thing." He smoothens her dark hair out of her eyes. "I am happy to share my home with you."

"And Will."

"And Will," Hannibal agrees.

There's the sound of a vehicle pulling up in the driveway. "Is that him?" Abigail asks, wiping her face.

"Probably. Shall we meet him?"

Abigail nods, dropping off her duffel bag from Port Haven on her new bed, and they head downstairs together.

———

There's so many of them, Hannibal thinks, aghast.

Four…five…no, *seven* mutts crowd in his foyer, barking excitedly as their owner shushes them. "Down, Winston," Will commands one particularly dirty-looking mongrel. Winston sits down, tongue wagging obediently, and sniffs Hannibal's pant leg. Hannibal tries not to recoil.

"Wow! You have so many dogs," Abigail says excitedly. Will smiles genuinely - and so does Hannibal. It is rare for the tension between them to cease. "What are their names?"

Will rattles off a series of names - Bailey, Riley, Xerxes, Scott, Peanut, Amber, and Winston. He points each one out, but Hannibal is not looking at the dogs - he's looking at the stray collector, looking at the way he beams with such obvious adoration at his ragtag pack.

Hannibal finds himself wishing Will would look at him the same way.

"Hiya, Peanut," Abigail coos, bending down and stroking the brown ears of a small Dachshund mix. Peanut whimpers and sniffs her fingers, jumping up on Abigail's knee. Abigail laughs, delighted. It's clear she has a favorite.

Will watches the scene with a quiet happiness that makes Hannibal's chest ache to witness. Perhaps this is what Will has been waiting for - a moment with Abigail free from the past that haunts them. A moment where he's more to Abigail than just Garret Jacob Hobbs' killer.

"She likes you," Will says in a quiet, stricken voice.

"I like her, too," Abigail declares. The other mutts clamor noisily for her attention, woofing together. How did Will manage to coexist with all of them? Hannibal is already starting to get a headache. He has no idea how he'll keep the place clean…he shudders at the thought of dirty paw prints in his pristine kitchen.

"Let me show you your room," Hannibal offers. Predictably, the pack of mutts follow their owner up the stairs, down the hallway. One of the dogs chews on the tassel of a throw rug in the second floor landing. Hannibal lets out a distraught, strangled moan at the sight. The blush pink tassel is now dripping with dog saliva. "No," he whispers in despair.

Will makes a disapproving tutting noise that makes the mongrel in question whimper in shame. "Bad dog, Riley," he says strictly. "No chewing on Hannibal's rug." He glances up at Hannibal; Hannibal is too distracted by the calamity to rearrange his features into nonchalance. "Hey, I'm really sorry about that," he says. "Riley's newer to the batch - he's still in training."

Hannibal swallows tightly. "It is…of no consequence," he says graciously. Or as graciously as he can manage.

Will's lips quirk a little. He can see Will is trying not to smile. "You look like you want me dead. Better yet, Riley."

Hannibal is struck again by Will's startling perception. With his gift, he can read Hannibal better than anyone else could endeavor to. Will's looking at him expectantly with raised eyebrows; Hannibal gives in and chuckles. "I am…unused to pets in my home," he confesses. "I am sure with time, it will become second nature."

Will's looking almost guilty. "I'm sorry, it's just - I couldn't leave them behind, you know? And leaving them at the pound - I just *couldn't* ."

He sounds so conflicted that Hannibal wants to reach out, wants to assuage him. And Hannibal almost does; his instincts hold him back. "I understand," he says softly. "They're your family, in a way. I couldn't ask you to give that up."

Will nods, looking grateful. Hannibal realizes he's staring. "Right. Your room."

Will's bedroom is smaller than Hannibal's own. It used to be Hannibal's art studio, until a few days ago he moved his oil paints and canvases to the basement. It's plain; Hannibal intentionally left it as un-decorated as possible so that the younger man could customize it for himself.

Judging by the messy, cluttered interior of Will's house in Wolf Trap, he will probably not decorate it at all. There is a bed, a closet, a nightstand, a tan colored chest of cabinets, and an oak wood desk. It's spartan, practical. Hopefully, it would suit all of Will's needs.

The pack of dogs leap onto the bed and make their home there, as Will walks around the room. "Wow. This is, uh, perfect," he says, smiling a little. "I basically have everything I need right here. I might actually take some things back to Wolf Trap."

"I'm glad it suits you. My bedroom is adjacent to yours, so feel free to knock on my door if you need anything, anytime."

Will blinks. "Wait, your bedroom is…right there?" He points to the leftmost wall.

"Yes," Hannibal says, not sure why Will is asking.

"Oh." Will scratches his head. "Guess I didn't realize I'd be right next door."

Hannibal's cheeks lightly color at the thought of late night conjugal visits…of Will sneaking into his bedroom, slipping in his sheets….

Will's looking at him. "Hannibal?"

"Yes?" He was staring. Again. He scrubs the errant thought about conjugal visits from his mind. It's not like that is ever going to happen.

"I asked where Abigail will be sleeping."

"Oh - in the bedroom across from your own. I've taken the liberty of decorating it," he adds with a note of pride.

"Then I'm sure it looks great."

Hannibal preens from the compliment, and then Will steps forward. Hannibal instinctively takes a step back and his knees hit the side of Will's bed. Will is looking up at him with an expression of admiration.

"Hey," Will says softly. "Thanks for everything. You've opened your home to Abigail and myself - you've gotten everything set up so well. I know it couldn't have been easy."

Hannibal's amber eyes widen. He feels his cheeks starting to warm. It's not that he's unused to the praise - it's that he's completely unused to hearing it from Will.

And then, Will claps a hand on his shoulder.

It's meant to be a gesture of camaraderie - of support - but it is so, so much more than that. He can feel Will's slim fingers, one by one, through the fabric of his suit jacket. How would they feel, in his hand? Around his neck? In his hair, carding through the blond and silver strands?

Hannibal's imagination runs wild in the short moment - and then Will steps back, giving him his personal space again. Hannibal wishes he hadn't. "It is my pleasure," he says respectfully in response.

Will smiles, nodding a little. "Alright, I'm going to head over to the truck, start bringing stuff up." He turns to go, his hand on the doorknob.

And then, an idea occurs to Hannibal. "Will. Wait." Will turns around. "I…I have a membership with the Baltimore city opera house. There is a showing of Don Giovanni this Friday, at seven. Perhaps we could, if you're inclined, attend…together?"

Hannibal's heart is racing as he finishes his rambling question. He just can't help himself - he can't help wanting to get closer to Will. Wanting him all to himself.

"Ah, sorry," Will says, wincing a little. "I'm getting dinner with Alana this Friday. But maybe…another time?"

"Of course," Hannibal hears himself say, as his heart sinks somewhere near his stomach. "Anytime."

Will nods appreciatively. "And hey! Maybe Abigail can come along, sometime, if she'd like to."

"Certainly," Hannibal says, hoping that his disappointment is not palpable. Will turns and leaves; Hannibal sinks down on his bed, his hands curling into fists.

Dinner. With Alana. Based on how excited Will had sounded, Hannibal knew only one thing - it was a date.

It should have been obvious. The way Will looked at her with such innocent admiration…he liked her, quite a bit. Alana was beautiful, smart, and talented. Of *course* he'd like her.

Hannibal's almost surprised by how crestfallen this revelation makes him feel. He gets to his feet, swallowing tightly. He doesn't mind, he tells himself firmly. Doesn't mind at all. They'll just go to the opera another time. With Abigail. Yes. That will be…just fine.

Everything will be just fine.

Chapter End Notes

sad cannibal noises
thank you for reading

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

At five o'clock on Friday, Will Graham is still a mess. He's back home - well, he still considers this house to be *Hannibal's* home - and he hasn't showered, or done his hair, or even chosen what to wear at all…he curses to himself as he hops in the shower. Work was so long today that he barely noticed the time. The hour of his date with Alana was creeping closer and closer.

Portia's was an upscale Greek restaurant in downtown Baltimore. Traffic would be terrible at this hour…he groans to himself as he gets out of the shower, dries off, and starts changing. He's wearing a salmon-colored dress shirt and dark slacks; he slicks his hair back self-consciously. He *hopes* he looks at least somewhat presentable. He can't imagine what Alana will be wearing.

He dashes downstairs and finds Abigail and Hannibal sitting on the leather sofa in the living room. Abigail's feeding treats to Peanut. "Where are you going?" she asks curiously. "You look nice."

"Thanks," Will says, feeling a little awkward. "I'm, uh, going to see Alana."

"Is it about work?" Abigail asks, cocking her head to the side. "Or about me?"

"It's…dinner."

"A date?" Abigail looks between Hannibal and Will. Hannibal's eyes flicker up to Will.

There's something…unreadable in Hannibal's dark expression. Will usually thinks he can read the older man…but *jealousy* is clearly not what Hannibal's feeling right now.

Right?

“Yes, it’s a date,” Will says, flushing slightly.

Abigail raises her eyebrows, seemingly dismayed. She looks, again, at Hannibal, trying to gauge his expression. Will can’t fathom as to why. “Uh…okay…um, good luck,” she tells Will with a thumbs-up.

Will nods, thanking her. Winston runs up to him, woofing excitedly.

“Down, Winston. You’ll get dog hair all over me,” he says, but can’t resist scratching him behind his ears. He looks over at Hannibal and Abigail. “Um, do you guys have any plans tonight?”

Abigail shrugs. Hannibal stands from the sofa. “I…I think I might lie down,” Hannibal says, his voice sounding a little strained. “I feel unwell.”

“Oh.” Will’s eyebrows furrow. “I hope you’re not coming down with something.”

“Must be the cold weather,” Hannibal says, averting his eyes.

“Maybe you have a fever.” Will reaches forward and presses his palm against Hannibal’s forehead. Hannibal’s soft, silvery-gold hair feels like silk to the touch. His forehead is warm, but not feverish. Hannibal’s eyes are blown wide by the sudden touch and his breath hitches in his throat.

“Nope…you don’t feel…feverish,” Will says. He never knew how soft Hannibal’s hair was before, and he has the strange thought that he’d like to run his hands through it.

“Must be something else,” Hannibal says in a quiet voice.

Will checks his watch. “I’m really sorry, but I’ve got to go,” he says in a panicked voice. It’s already five-thirty. “See you guys later.” He turns to Abigail. “Um…don’t go to bed too late, okay?”

“I’m sixteen, not six,” Abigail says, laughing with disbelief.

This had been a point of contention since Will and Abigail had moved in earlier this week - deciding house rules. Hannibal had created a chore chart for all of them. Abigail would help with laundry, Will would handle cleaning, and Hannibal would handle cooking. Other rules - such as no muddy shoes in the house, when to feed the dogs, and the schedule of the household - were works in progress.

Will clenches his jaw. “Hannibal, can you-”

“Yes. I will make sure Abigail goes to bed at a reasonable hour.”

“Oh come on. A *bedtime?* Are you serious?”

“Gotta go,” Will repeats, and dashes out the door.

___

Hannibal lies down in his bed, feeling worse than he has in a long time.

His eyes squeeze shut as he recalls the way Will walked out. How warm his fingers felt against his face. *Why did he have to leave?* Hannibal thinks with despair.

He scrubs his face with his hands, sighing restlessly. It didn’t matter. It was *fine* . It was just dinner…and after all, why did it matter who Will dated? It was none of Hannibal’s business.

Not at all.

He reaches out for the gray weighted blanket beside him, tangled in his sheets. It had been a rather impulsive purchase, after Bedelia's therapy session with him last week. The pressure of the weighted blanket put one's autonomic nervous system into rest mode, reducing some symptoms of anxiety, such as a quickened heart rate or breathing. But Hannibal had found another use for it - it helped simulate the feeling of touch. He wraps himself in the blanket, burrowing into it.

He had covertly looked up solutions to touch starvation on his iPad last week…and if he took longer, hotter showers this week and ordered a weighted blanket online…well, no one was the wiser.

He focuses on the feeling of the weighted blanket against his skin, trying to block out his thoughts. It was fine. Everything's fine. Will's personal life - his dating life - didn't affect him at all. He'd go on his dinner date, and then he'd come back home. Perhaps tomorrow morning they could all go out for an excursion downtown…as something akin to a family. Yes. Maybe Abigail would like that.

And it's then that a terrible thought occurs to Hannibal.

What if Will and Alana…were not *just* going to get dinner?

An image forms in his mind, of Will and Alana in a sensuous embrace…perhaps stumbling out of a cab, into Alana's home…Alana's hands around his collar, unbuttoning that salmon-colored shirt that hugged his frame so well…their lips devouring each other, their hands all over one another…

No. Hannibal's chest seizes up. *No, no, no.*

It doesn't matter, he tells himself firmly. Whatever Will chooses to do in his love life…it's not Hannibal's business.

Definitely not.

So why did Hannibal feel so abominably wretched?

It's then that he hears a knock on his bedroom door. Hannibal throws a cardigan over his pajamas, sitting up in bed. "Come in."

Abigail pops her head in the doorway. "Hey. Are you okay?"

"I'm just fine," Hannibal says with a tentative smile.

Abigail clearly doesn't buy it. She gingerly sits on the edge of his bed, looking at him. "You're not *actually* sick, are you?"

Hannibal averts her gaze and coughs pointedly.

"Bullshit," she says with a laugh. He raises his eyebrows - whether it's at her brashness or her rudeness, he can't decide. "You weren't sick like, five minutes before Will walked downstairs looking like Cinderella before the ball."

"No," Hannibal admits. "I…was not."

Abigail's expression sobers. "But…are you feeling okay, then?"

"I don't know," Hannibal murmurs, under his breath. "I have…I have no *reason* to be upset…yet, I find myself…" He shakes his head lightly. "I am rarely speechless by my own emotions, but it seems Will is intent on breaking my every rule."

Abigail tracks his features carefully. "You didn't want him to go with Alana, did you?"

“Whatever Will does in his free time is his prerogative.”

“Yeah, sure. But did *you* want him to see Alana?”

“No,” Hannibal says breathlessly. “No.”

“Oh, Hannibal.” Abigail soothingly pats his shoulder. “It’s gonna be okay, I promise.”

Hannibal can’t help it - he reaches out with both arms and folds her into a hug. Abigail hugs him back, resting her head against his collarbone. “No one’s immune to boy problems,” she says sympathetically. Hannibal can’t fathom what she’s talking about.

“Hey.” She pulls back to look at him. “I have an idea. Why don’t we order pizza and watch a movie?”

“Order…takeout?” Hannibal asks. He would normally shudder at such an idea.

“It won’t kill you,” Abigail chuckles, “plus, I bet you don’t want to cook now. It’ll be fun.”

“All right,” Hannibal says weakly, and lets Abigail drag him downstairs.

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“*You see, a man will never love you or treat you as well as a store. If a man doesn't fit, you can't exchange him seven days later for a gorgeous cashmere sweater,”* Rebecca Bloomwood says on screen as she struts through the streets of Manhattan, looking like she’s just walked off the runway. “ *Rebecca Bloomwood. Occupation: Journalist. Jacket - Visa. Dress - AMEX. Belt - MasterCard. Bag - Gucci!”*

Hannibal lets himself get swept into the rather silly, but charming romance between the ditsy spendthrift Rebecca, and her attractive boss, Luke Brandon. He feels rather sated by the garlic knots and the overly-greasy cheese pizza Abigail had ordered. They're sitting on the leather sofa together, the dogs surrounding them. Winston's sitting quite close to his left foot. Peanut's curled up between them.

"Luke's really cute, isn't he?" Abigail says dreamily. Hannibal hums in acquiescence, feeling sleepiness steal over him. Or perhaps it's more like coziness.

He's so unused to others in his household who aren't temporary guests, he realizes. It feels so odd - yet so *natural* - to have Abigail beside him. They aren't doing anything particularly special - hell, he's almost feeling guilty for having his surrogate daughter eating such unhealthy fast food under his watch - but he finds himself enjoying the company, nevertheless.

His thoughts stray to Will. He wonders how his dinner date is progressing. He has to force himself not to check the clock hanging above the doorway. If he stares at it, the hands will certainly slow down. He glances surreptitiously at it - it's half-past six.

Clearly, he wasn't subtle enough - Abigail steals a look at him. There's concern written over her features, and Hannibal feels oddly touched. It should be him and Will taking care of her, not the other way around. She's clearly worried about him. Hannibal forces his eyes from the clock back to the screen, hoping to put some of her worry to rest.

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Will pulls up to the driveway of Hannibal's home in downtown Baltimore, popping the collar of his salmon-colored shirt. He feels stuffy, almost like he can't breathe.

Dinner was…nice. Alana wore a beautiful navy colored dress, and the food at Portia's was delicious. They ate gyros and had baklava for dessert. It was so good that Will got two extra orders, for Hannibal and Abigail.

Alana had been lovely, as always. She regaled him with stories of her time with Hannibal at Johns Hopkins together. Will felt the stress of his week wind down, felt it all melt away as they catched up together.

But at the end of dinner, Alana reached forward and grasped his hand, and asked if he'd like to come back to her place for a drink.

And that's when alarm bells started to ring in his mind. He didn't catch every social cue, sure, but he understood that when Alana was inviting him over for a drink…it certainly wasn't going to be *just* a drink.

And he panicked, and made up a lie about having plans with Abigail and Hannibal early tomorrow morning, and needing to go to bed early. Alana was perfectly cordial at this. It was the usual song-and-dance - *we should totally do this again; yes, absolutely; I hope you have a safe ride back.*

And now, sitting in the driveway, Will felt like kicking himself. Why didn't he say yes to Alana? He found her attractive, for sure. She was beautiful.

But…for some reason…the idea of saying yes to her felt wrong. It felt, almost, like cheating.

Almost like it'd be a betrayal to Abigail and Hannibal.

That's not right, Will thinks to himself. Just because he now lived with Abigail and Hannibal didn't mean that he had to give up his love life - or what little of it existed.

So why did it feel so…unfair?

Part of it was that he felt like he was leaving them behind…especially Hannibal, who had sounded quite sick before he left the house.

Maybe Hannibal was working himself too hard. Every day of the week, he was waking up early to cook for them, and go to work, along with all his other responsibilities. Maybe the new adjustments to his household - human and dog adjustments - were a real strain to him. A stab of guilt floods Will. He had also effectively abandoned Hannibal to look after Abigail in his absence. Not that the young girl was a handful, necessarily, but still, it was the principle of the thing.

This whole co-parenting thing was a tough nut to crack, for sure.

He makes a mental note to have a conversation with Hannibal about it - about splitting parenting responsibilities, not just household responsibilities - as he walks through the front door into the living room. The TV is on, a movie he doesn't recognize playing. His breath catches.

Abigail and Hannibal are on the sofa, fast asleep. Abigail's curled up on the left end of the sofa, Hannibal beside her. Empty boxes of pizza are lying in front of them, on the coffee table. The dogs are sleeping around them, too.

Will's heart quickens at the sight. It's so domestic, so cozy.

It feels…like family.

He steps forward. He knows he probably ought to wake them; they'll get cramps in their sides from sleeping on the sofa, no doubt. For the meantime, though, all he does is this.

He reaches forward and tangles his fingers in Hannibal's hair, brushing it back gently. His hair is soft, spun golden and silver, and Will marvels quietly at the silkiness of it, at the way the colors weave together. He draws his hand back, feeling oddly guilty at the way he's stolen the touch, feeling his heartbeat quicken in his chest.

Seriously, Will thinks*, what's wrong with me?*

Chapter End Notes

- HELLO FRENS! the movie mentioned is Confessions of a Shopaholic in case you were wondering! :D with our beloved hugh dancy in it :D

- Thank you for reading! to be continued :3

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

TW mentions of violence

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"We need to talk," Will whispers to Hannibal when he goes down to the kitchen the next morning. He's wearing an old t-shirt with holes in five places, and boxers. Will's hair is still messy from tossing and turning last night. On the contrary, Hannibal is already in a checkered gray-and-blue bespoke suit. The suit jacket hangs neatly over the seat at the head of the kitchen table; there's an apron tied around his waist.

Hannibal only lets his eyes crinkle in amusement at the sight of his co-parent. Those tangled curls…how he'd like to smoothen them out with his fingers. "Good morning, Will."

The glass kettle is heating on the stovetop; Hannibal's got sausage and eggs sauteing on the griddle. A stack of souffle pancakes lies on a plate. "Perhaps you can set the table, and we can discuss whatever you'd like."

Will begins pulling knives and forks from the drawers and setting the kitchen table with their assigned placemats. "It's about Abigail."

"Oh? What about her?"

"I feel like we're…" Will shrugs a little. "Not parenting enough. No, I feel like *I'm* not parenting enough."

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. "Where did these thoughts come from?"

“Last night,” Will confesses in a rush. “I shouldn’t have left you with her - I shouldn’t have left - and it’s not fair, because you gave up your peace and quiet at home, and now you have two new people under your roof, and I’m just not…helping. Enough.”

Hannibal steps forward, turning off the stove and then turning to him. “You have every right to have your own life outside this household. Abigail is sixteen, not six; she’s not a handful at all. What makes you think you’re not pulling your weight?”

“I dunno - it just feels like you do everything around here,” Will says, gesticulating wildly, “like, you cook so much - not just a meal, but appetizers and entrees and desserts and it’s so *much* .”

“Cooking is enjoyable to me. Especially if I have company.”

“That’s besides the point. I know it must still be a lot. And I just feel like I don’t do enough.”

“You have a very taxing job at the FBI, Will, and you work more hours than I do. Besides, you do clean up around here.”

“You work really hard, too,” Will says defensively. He narrows his eyes shrewdly at the scrumptious feast in front of him. “How long did it take you to make breakfast?”

“I woke up at five o’clock.”

“Five?” Will gasps, aghast. Guilt floods through him. Was Hannibal slaving away in the kitchen for hours?

Hannibal chuckles. “I always wake up at five, Will. Before breakfast I had time to shower, get dressed, and begin a new composition on the theremin.”

“Right. Your…humming thing.” Will groans. “That makes me feel even worse. You were all productive and making this buffet while I was *sleeping* .”

“I can assure you,” Hannibal says, “your concern is touching, but you really need not concern yourself. I am perfectly capable and happy to do everything I do.”

“That makes me feel even worse,” Will says, groaning as he scrubs his face. “It feels like… god, it feels like you’re the mom, and I’m the semi-absent dad.”

Hannibal’s eyes widen fractionally. “Why am I the mother, in your analogy?”

Will realizes what he’s said. “I mean,” he backpedals, “like, you cook - and you - you’re so stupidly well-dressed all the time and…you just seem…maternal.”

Hannibal’s cheeks are pinkening slightly, and then Will truly just wishes he’d never gotten up in the morning. Stupidly well-dressed? Did he really just say that out loud?

“Hey guys,” Abigail says in a lilting voice as she traipses into the kitchen. She’s wearing bunny slippers and an oversized black turtleneck sweater. “Ooh, pancakes!”

Thankfully Abigail’s presence distracts Will from his distinct foot-in-mouth syndrome.

“How was your date last night, Will?” Abigail asks him once they’ve tucked into breakfast.

“It was fine. Great,” Will says, and feels like cringing. Why does it feel like he’s *cheating* , whenever he talks about his love life? “And, uh, you guys had a good time at home?”

“Oh, yeah. We watched a chick flick and ordered pizza. I thought it’d give Hannibal a heart attack,” Abigail says with a devious smile.

Will chuckles. Hannibal smiles good-naturedly.

“When did you come home this morning, Will?” Abigail asks innocently. “Didn’t hear you get in.”

“Uh, around nine. Wasn’t, um, too late.”

“Oh?” Abigail raises her eyebrows. “I thought you slept over at Dr. Bloom’s place.”

“Abigail,” Hannibal says, in a hushed, warning voice. “Don’t be rude.”

“What?” Abigail says innocuously, although her aquamarine eyes are shining with mischief. “I’m just asking a question.”

Will sets his fork down. “No, I didn’t sleep over,” he says pointedly. “Does that answer your question?”

“Yeah, I think it does,” Abigail says with a smirk.

Hannibal clears his throat delicately. “I was thinking about going to the Walters Art Museum today,” he says. “Perhaps the three of us could go, for a little excursion. Have you ever gone, Abigail?”

Abigail shakes her head no. It makes sense; she’s pretty new to Baltimore. “I haven’t either,” Will admits.

“Is that so?” Hannibal asks curiously. “Then we should definitely go.”

“Sounds fun,” Abigail says with a shrug. “At least, better than staring at the wall.”

Once they clear the dishes, and Abigail goes upstairs to change, Will resumes his earlier conversation with Hannibal. And hopefully he won't embarrass himself this time.

"Thanks, you know. It's a good thing, to get her out of the house."

"I agree," Hannibal says with his faint smile.

"And…and I'm going to try to be better," Will says, sighing restlessly. "I want to spend more time with her. One-on-one, if that's okay. And if you ever need time out of the house, or have a private appointment…I can watch over Abigail by myself, too."

"Thank you, Will." The corners of Hannibal's eyes crinkle gently. "I agree. One on one time with her would help things tremendously. Perhaps you can take her fishing, as planned."

"Yeah," Will says hopefully. "Thanks." He claps Hannibal on the shoulder before going upstairs to get changed, and misses the look of brief enrapture on Hannibal's face as he goes.

———

"This is one of my favorite pieces of the gallery," Hannibal confides. They're standing in front of a framed woodblock print in the East Asian section of the Walters Art Museum. "The Woman in Blue Combing Her Hair. It's one of Goyō Hashiguchi's masterpieces. He was a forefather of the shin-haga movement, a revival of ukiyo-e. One could describe the latter as the Japanese art renaissance."

"It looks kind of like the prints in your office," Will muses aloud.

"Yes. Those are also woodblock prints from the same era." Hannibal rewards him with a faint smile.

"She has a nice robe on," Abigail says.

“A kimono,” Hannibal gently corrects.

“How do you know so much about Japan?” Abigail asks next.

“I have my aunt Murasaki to thank for that. She is from Osaka.”

“You have a Japanese aunt?” Will asks, surprised.

“By marriage, not by blood. She remarried my uncle.”

It occurs to Will just then that he doesn’t know much about Hannibal’s family history at all. He did know the basics, from one of their previous conversations - Hannibal was orphaned at a young age and raised his younger sister Mischa until her untimely death. Then, he was taken in by his uncle and aunt.

He doesn’t know much more than that. He doesn’t know what happened to Mischa, or what his orphaned life was like. It’s strange to think of Hannibal not being in a position of power. The man exuded confidence and surety in ways Will knew he could never emulate.

Thinking about Hannibal being a young boy, orphaned and alone, looking after his younger sister…perhaps sitting in the thick of the woods, making a bonfire in the Baltic wilderness… it was a sobering thought. A stab of protectiveness floods him. As they pass through the art gallery Will can’t help but wish he knew Hannibal better.

Abigail snaps a photo of a 19th century Thai drawing, while Hannibal tells her the history of the Vessantara Jataka in Theravada Buddhism. Will stands behind the pair of them, silently watching as Hannibal’s lips move and as Abigail nods her head, looking between the artwork and her surrogate father. He lets the sound of Hannibal’s voice wash over him; lisping on the sibilants, a low murmur as to not disturb the other visitors at the gallery. It’s soothing in a way Will wouldn’t expect.

What Will also doesn't expect is how *natural* it seems, the relationship between Abigail and Hannibal. He was able to converse with her so easily, where Will felt intense awkwardness and shame any time he tried to open his mouth around her. Perhaps it was also the nature of his job; as a psychiatrist, navigating conflict and difficult conversations must be second nature, whereas to Will it was a battlefield.

He'd expected himself to envy Hannibal, for his ease around their pseudo-daughter. But instead something like admiration and relief fills him. If it had been just Will navigating this solo-parenting thing, he'd have definitely fucked it up.

He's infinitely glad, in that moment, that he doesn't have to do this alone.

"-Will?"

Both Abigail and Hannibal are looking at him expectantly. Will blinks twice. "What?"

"We thought we might go to lunch," Hannibal says. "It's almost half-past noon. We could resume our inspection of the museum's third floor afterwards, perhaps."

"Sure," Will says, and he follows his pseudo family to the museum's restaurant.

———

"Abigail, have you given any more consideration to going back to school?" Hannibal asks over lunch. They're eating halloumi and shawarma sandwiches with falafels. It's quite good, although not as good as Hannibal's cooking, Will thinks to himself.

Abigail pulls a face. "I don't want to go back to school," she says determinedly. "I want to work."

"Work? Work where?" Will asks.

“The FBI,” Abigail confesses. Her bright aquamarine eyes sparkle with interest. “I want your job, Will. I want to catch killers.”

Will is completely taken aback by this. He had no idea Abigail was interested in criminology. “No.”

“No?” Abigail looks baffled.

“No,” Will repeats firmly. “Not a chance.”

Abigail’s crestfallen expression makes Will’s heart sink, but he’s firm in his decision. “What the hell? Why not?”

“You’re sixteen years old, which, first of all, you have to be at least twenty-three before you apply for a special agent,” Will begins, “ *and* you haven’t graduated high school or earnt a degree yet, which puts you far out of the running.”

“Can’t I, like, intern?” Abigail says, frowning, “shadow you, or something?”

“It’s risky and *dangerous* . There’s no way you can-”

“There’s no way I can handle it?” Abigail fires back. “You think I have no exposure? Oh, I think I do. I’ve got some first-hand experience,” she says defiantly, tapping the rose-white, raised scar on her neck.

Will winces slightly. Just the memory of that day, in the Hobbs’ family kitchen…Garret Jacob Hobbs slashing his daughter’s throat…Abigail bleeding out on the kitchen floor while looking at Will with wide, teary eyes, gasping for breath, gasping for life…it was one of the worst days of his life. He feels his shoulders start to shake. “That’s not-”

“That’s quite enough,” Hannibal says firmly, putting an end to their diatribe. He rubs a hand over Will’s back, soothing him. The touch is foreign, but not uncomfortable. Will’s shoulders go slack as Hannibal rubs circles between his shoulder blade; his pulse flutters under his touch. “Abigail, Will is partially right. You are far too young and inexperienced to work at the FBI.”

“But-”

“But if that is your future career goal, to work at Quantico…well, neither Will nor I can stop you then.” Hannibal allows her a small smile. “You *will* need to graduate high school, and at least have a bachelor’s degree, to be considered for a special agent.”

Abigail withers a little. “So I *have* to go back to school?” she says miserably. She turns to Will. “Can’t you get me in?”

Will doesn’t answer, merely fixes her with a stern glare from the top of his glasses. He misses Hannibal’s smirk at his expression.

“We will transfer you, of course,” Hannibal says in a tone of reassurance. “To a high school here in Baltimore. You won’t have to resume your studies in Minnesota.”

“I would hope not,” she says with an eye-roll.

“Excellent,” Hannibal says, sounding pleased. “I’m glad you’ve agreed, Abigail.”

“Yeah, well, I didn’t have much choice,” Abigail says morosely. She gives Will a pointed glare, and Will tries not to flinch.

___

Will wakes up against the kitchen floor. His face is cold, from where it's pressed against the tiles.

He hears whimpers and choked gasps…he opens his eyes and sees Abigail Hobbs in her father's arms. One of Garret Jacob Hobbs' hands is around her shoulders, pulling her close. There's a knife in his other hand, pressed right up against her throat.

Will tries to get up - tries to move - but he's stuck. Paralyzed in place, against the tiles of the kitchen.

"See?" Garret Jacob Hobbs hisses. " *See?"*

The arterial spray paints the kitchen in blots of scarlet. Abigail sinks to the tiles next to Will, crying and bleeding out, maroon blood pooling from the side of her neck, as she chokes out, as she cries. Will desperately tries to get up, tries to move, tries to help her - but he can't. He's frozen in place, and he watches as her eyes close with the serenity of eternal sleep, as her gasping finally quietens.

Will wakes in a cold sweat, his heart racing. His breath comes out in short, staccato gasps. He's in his bed, in Hannibal's house…he's not in Minnesota…Garret Jacobs Hobbs is dead… Abigail is alive and well, just down the corridor…

But the simple logic of reality is not enough to shake away his nightmare.

Will puts his head between his hands and starts to cry.

Chapter End Notes

SORRY FOR THE ANGST BABIES<3
thank u for reading

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

HURT AND COMFORT (heavy on the comfort)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal stirs in his sleep when he hears something odd coming from the next room.

It's choked, shaking gasps that turn into sobs.

Will, he thinks, his mind flooding with worry.

He sits up immediately, throws a nightgown over his pajamas, and slips into the hallway. Sure enough, the sounds of Will crying can be heard from here. Not waiting to knock, he turns the doorknob and walks inside Will's room.

"Will?" he says quietly, "is everything all right?"

Will is curled in a fetal position under the covers, only the top of his head peeking out. His body is wracked by sobs; he doesn't even notice Hannibal's presence until he puts a hand on Will's shoulder. "Will?"

He flinches, sitting upright. "What the- oh, it's you," he says in a wavery voice.

"Will, what's wrong?" Hannibal asks gently.

Will's eyes are shining with fresh tears. He says nothing, only burying his face against Hannibal's chest, wrapping his arms around Hannibal's shoulders.

Hannibal is startled by this abrupt touch. Will hasn't done so much as hug him ever before; now he *clings* to him, as if he's a lifeboat in the middle of the riotous sea. One of Hannibal's hands finds its way in Will's hair, carding through the curls gently, and the other rubs circles on Will's back.

Will shakes against him, trembling; there's a faint sheen of sweat on his brow. A nightmare, Hannibal thinks, putting two and two together.

"It's alright," Hannibal murmurs, "you're alright, Will. You're safe, and you're home… nothing can hurt you here."

"I saw Abigail," Will chokes out frantically, "she was - she was dying, again, bleeding out - and I couldn't do anything to help her - I couldn't stop it -"

"Hush, now." Will's curls are soft tendrils in his fingers; his heart rate is jumpy and erratic, like his breathing. "It was just a dream, Will. No more than that." He runs his hand down Will's back, up and down, slowly, and feels his breathing start to quieten.

"I couldn't help her," Will repeats, his words twisted with so much self-hatred that Hannibal could barely stand to hear it. "I…I was useless. I just watched her die."

He speaks against Hannibal's collarbone; Hannibal can almost feel his lips moving against the fabric of his nightgown. "You are not useless," Hannibal says, trying to quit his inner thoughts. "You saved her life. We did, together."

"Did I?" Will sniffles. "I killed her father."

"Because he was trying to kill her." Hannibal's hand smoothens the fabric of Will's soaked-through shirt, between his shoulder blades. "We gave her a new life. Her father's death tied you to her, didn't it? I hold less of the burden than you do; you have, perhaps, twice the weight of responsibility for your actions."

Will nods, after a moment. Hannibal goes on, in a low, soothing voice. “You must forgive yourself,” he murmurs, “you did what was necessary. Don’t think of it as you killed Garret Jacob Hobbs. Think of it as you saved her.”

Will rocks back and forth gently in Hannibal’s grasp, still not intent on letting him go.

“Shall I go and fetch Abigail?” Hannibal asks, then. “Would it be good for you to see her, in the flesh?”

“No,” Will says immediately. “That’s - that’s so embarrassing. I already woke you up,” he says miserably. “I hope I didn’t wake her up, too.”

“She’s probably fast asleep. I heard you because I possess an acute sense of hearing.”

“And smell,” Will says grouchily. “I bet I smell *awful* .”

Hannibal inhales gently. There was sweat, of course, and that scent of odious, cheap pine-scented aftershave mingled on the pillows and the sheets…but there was that underlying fevered sweetness of Will’s natural, musky scent that was anything but awful.

“On the contrary,” is all Hannibal says, his cheeks pinkening faintly. He is suddenly grateful for the dark.

“Yeah, but I feel so sweaty and gross,” Will complains. And then, he pulls his t-shirt over his head.

Hannibal’s mind short-circuits. It should be nothing out of the ordinary; but his eyes are caught in the way the low light catches the ripples of dark curly hair on his chest, on the lean muscles of his arms and abdomen. Will seems completely unbothered by his state of undress; and why should he? It shouldn’t matter. It shouldn’t matter at all.

Hannibal is suddenly *very* grateful for the dark. His face must be flaming.

They sit together on the bed, limbs still intertwined in silence. Hannibal pictures Will gathering up his stray thoughts like sheets of paper that have flown free from their binding; pictures him stacking them up again and filing them neatly away in his consciousness as mere horrors of his imagination. He wonders what the inside of Will's mind looks like. What levels his memory palace contains, if he has one at all.

Then, Will says something that completely distracts him from his thoughts.

"Can you stay?" Will blurts out. "I - I mean - I just feel like-"

"Of course," Hannibal says, taken aback but trying to sound as nonchalant as he could. "I'm right here, Will. For anything you need."

"Thanks," Will says gratefully, even though Hannibal feels like his anxiety's just reached level ten. Will flops down on the space he once occupied in the bed; Hannibal gingerly lowers himself on the opposite side of the mattress, facing him.

Hannibal feels as if he can't breathe, for a moment. It's not that he's never shared a bed before, of course - it's just that he's never shared a bed with Will.

And if he's candid with himself, it's been quite some time since he's trusted anyone enough to let them share his bed.

Will lies on his back, not looking at him. Hannibal lies curled on his side, his eyes focused on his soft nose, the curls stuck to his forehead, the long lashes that brush the tops of Will's cheeks. There's still a good foot of space between them. This shouldn't affect Hannibal. Shouldn't affect him at all.

And yet, he finds he can barely quieten the quick beat of his heart. When sleep finally steals over him, Will has long since succumbed to it.

———

“Hannibal?”

Hannibal stirs gently. He feels warm, burrowed into the sheets and pressed up against a hot body. Limbs intertwined with his own give him the feeling of being in a cocoon. The smell of fevered sweetness and pine-scented aftershave fill his nostrils.

“Hannibal? Will?”

Hannibal stirs again, making a feeble noise of protest. His nose is pressed against soft curls of hair - Will’s curls, he thinks after a moment. For this warm body against his, it can only be Will, can’t it? No one else smells like this, feels like this…

“Guys?” The voice is back again. “Will?”

Will, besides him, groans and flips over, his hand hitting Hannibal’s shoulder. Hannibal’s eyes blink open lazily. He’s got an arm slung around Will’s bare waist, and his skin feels as hot as a burn.

Will is a vision, even just after having woken up. His curls fan out like a halo on his pillow. His pajama pants are slung low on his hips; Hannibal can make out the v-shape of his hip-bones jutting against the tanned skin. Can make out the happy trail leading below the hem of his checkered pants…and the faint curls covering his chest…

And then his gaze lifts to Abigail, standing in the doorway, looking caught between wanting to giggle and wanting to flee.

“Good morning,” she says, when she catches his eye, “I don’t want to be *interrupting* anything-”

“Hey, Abigail,” Will says in a low, scratchy voice. His *morning* voice. It makes a shiver go through Hannibal’s spine. “No, no it’s okay, you’re not interrupting anything.”

“Ooo-kay,” she says, and quickly moves to shut the door. “Hannibal, don’t be mad, but I *might* have caused a small fire in the kitchen.”

Hannibal makes a small moan of despair, and runs his hands through his hair. “I had better see to that.”

He rises from the bed, leaving Will behind, who flops over, his tousled curls spread over the other side of the pillow. He thinks for a moment. “Will?”

Will yawns. “Yeah?”

“You’ll be alright? After…last night?”

Will nods. “Thanks,” he says, in a small, shy voice that makes Hannibal’s chest constrict.

And then, without being able to resist, he reaches forward and runs his fingers through Will’s curls, smoothening them back.

“Anytime,” Hannibal says quietly, and rises from the bed.

———

Will sets the breakfast table while Hannibal wears a quietly chagrined expression and scrubs the burned pancake batter off the stovetop. Abigail helps him salvage the burnt pancakes on the griddle.

“Sorry again,” Abigail says abashedly. “I wanted to make a surprise.”

Hannibal gives her a small, placating smile, even though he must be upset. A spring of admiration rises within him for Hannibal. He sharply remembers his father berating him at the tiniest infractions; for spilling soup on the floor. He didn’t want to be that kind of father, and he was glad Hannibal wasn’t, either.

“It is no matter,” Hannibal says. He slings a dirty dish towel over his arm and strolls to the sink. “I burnt a batch of souffles my first time around in the kitchen. I still do, from time to time.”

Will raises an eyebrow. He’s pretty sure Hannibal has never burnt something before - or at least, not in years. He can’t imagine someone as refined as Hannibal losing control, in the kitchen, or anywhere.

Hannibal always seemed so…perfect, to Will somehow. Refined. Two steps ahead in every way, whereas Will barely felt like he could catch up. Hannibal, with his three-piece checkered suits, and his slicked-back hair, and his culinary expertise…even the way he spoke, in that rich, low accented voice, like a rumble reverberating through his chest…

Even last night, Hannibal had been in perfect control. It was always like that, wasn’t it? While Will broke, Hannibal was there to pick up the pieces. To console him.

And it made *no effect* on him at all. That was the damndest thing. To Hannibal, such a thing was normal, everyday. To care for others - wasn’t it? He was a surgeon for many years, and a therapist for more. Looking after Will, reassuring him…holding him.

Hannibal wasn’t affected by it at all.

Not even when he held Will, sharing his bed with him.

It took Will a long time to calm himself after his nightmare, after as vivid and painful as it was. But Hannibal's presence soothed him, surprisingly. It had been a long time since Will had allowed himself to be held like that. Soothed like that.

And Will's heart had raced at the proximity between them.

Something was different. Or at least, something *felt* different. Hannibal's care over him didn't feel merely…clinical. It felt…intimate.

But then Hannibal's voice didn't waver, the way his voice did. Hannibal didn't hesitate in the way he did, at making such a request.

To Hannibal, last night…it must have meant nothing. It must have just been the act of a good friend, comforting him in a time of need.

Meanwhile, Will was going down a mental spiral.

Because…he didn't *like* Hannibal. Certainly not. That would make everything messy. The almost patient-doctor relationship between them; the guardianship they had over Abigail… no. Everything would be ruined if he got a crush on Hannibal.

After all, this was definitely not a crush. *Definitely* not. The way his palms felt clammy after waking up this morning, seeing Hannibal's arm slung over his waist…seeing the older man's nose pressed up against his nape, nosing along the back of his curls…the thrill that went up his spine and quickened his pace…

That was just…normal…right?

———

Bedelia sat with one leg crossed neatly over the other. Her blue eyes pierce Hannibal's Sphinx-like poker face.

"It's not like you to hide from me, Hannibal."

Hannibal shifts almost imperceptibly in his seat. Almost. She catches it with a flick of her icy eyes. He's rare to let his mask slip, rare to show any signs of discomfort. But Bedelia has him pinned like a specimen to a vivisection table.

"I haven't been hiding from you."

"I heard from Dr. Bloom that Abigail was discharged from Port Haven and now lives under your roof," Bedelia says shrewdly. "Not only that, but so does Will Graham."

It's a shame, Hannibal thinks. He had really liked Alana. Emphasis on the past tense. Now he mentally sifts through his recipe book, thinking of what would suit her best…he would serve her tongue, yes. Boiled, seared in thyme and garlic. Simple, and clean, her tongue would be eaten with relish. It would do well for all the wagging it did.

"I didn't know the details of my private life were up for scrutiny." He levels a glare at her. "Nor did I think you and Alana would confer about me, behind my back."

"I'm merely…surprised to hear it from her rather than you. She brought it up; I merely listened." Bedelia's keen eyes peer past the fringes of his person suit. "Tell me, how does it feel, to have both of them under your roof?"

"It feels…" Hannibal clears his throat. He keeps any of his personal thoughts out of his mouth. "It feels like we're doing what's best for Abigail. We are offering her security."

Bedelia only smiles. She can't be dissuaded so easily. "I didn't ask how Abigail feels. I asked how you felt."

“It feels…appropriate,” Hannibal says, choosing his words with care. “Cohabitation with Will and Abigail…it’s come more naturally than I anticipated it to.”

“No growing pains?” she asks in a slightly sardonic tone.

“Of course, there are some, as in any household - pseudo-household,” he corrects himself.

Bedelia arches an eyebrow. “You two are Abigail’s legal guardians. There is no artifice in your arrangement.”

Hannibal bites on his lower lip. Of course there was artifice, to some degree. Normally, parental guardians were partners, as well.

Obviously, he didn’t see such a relationship between himself and Will.

“The entire arrangement is…unconventional.”

“Perhaps because so many lines have been crossed.” She gives him a telling look.

Hannibal purses his lips. “And what if there are new lines being drawn between myself and Will?”

Bedelia’s mouth twitches. “I thought we were talking about Abigail.”

If Hannibal were a lesser man, he would have blushed.

“Will Graham is not your patient, but you two share a professional relationship. Tell me, have you maintained your professionalism with him?”

Hannibal twitches ever so slightly. He thinks he’ll leave out the memory of holding Will until the ghosts of his nightmare faded away, and then waking up with Will in his arms in his bed. Mostly because he himself can barely wrap his head around it.

“Our relationship is…evolving,” Hannibal says softly, looking at his Oxfords.

He still partially didn’t know what to feel from two nights ago. Didn’t know how to feel after it had affected him so much, so deeply.

Will Graham’s touch was more powerful to him than anything he’d ever had the chance of feeling. It went beyond the release of pleasure hormones, went beyond his basic human need. It was…intimate. There was no other word for it. Waking up beside him…feeling his skin pressed against his own…it felt natural. It felt right.

And Hannibal had no idea what to do with *that* revelation.

“Make sure you keep the lines of your relationship well-defined, at least in your own mind, Hannibal,” Bedelia says. “Or else the edges will begin to blur.”

Chapter End Notes

thank you for reading<333

End Notes

Thank you for reading<3

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